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Affidavit Says Ex-CIA Agent Met High-Level KGB Officers

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Fugitive former CIA officer Edward Lee Howard met with senior Soviet intelligence officers a year ago in Austria and agreed to provide them with classified information about sources and methods of U.S. intelligence operatives, according to an FBI affidavit based on information from a high-level Soviet defector.

The affidavit, unsealed yesterday in Albuquerque, said Howard received an undisclosed amount of money, and it provides the first details about his alleged spying activity.

Howard, fired from his Central Intelligence Agency post in the

clandestine service in June 1983, is believed to have fled the country Sept. 21, the day after FBI agents confronted him with allegations of spying for the Soviets.

He eluded FBI surveillance of his home outside Santa Fe, and an arrest warrant charging him with espionage was issued Sept. 23.

CBS News, quoting unnamed sources, reported last night that, based on information given to the Soviets by Howard, a "high-level" Soviet official was executed. No time or place was mentioned in the CBS report.

CBS said that the executed official had provided information to U.S. intelligence and that several other persons providing the United States with Soviet intelligence in-



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formation have not been heard from.

Neither the CIA nor Sen. David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, would comment on the CBS report.

The Albuquerque affidavit said Howard met with two current CIA employees on Sept. 24, 1984, also in Austria, and told them that he had considered providing information to the Soviets after the CIA fired him.

Howard told the CIA officials that, in October 1983, he "spent hours in the vicinity of the Soviet Embassy [in Washington] trying to decide whether to enter the embassy and disclose classified information." He told the two that he decided against entering.

After meeting with the two, Howard met clandestinely with the high-level KGB officials and made his espionage pact, according to the affidavit. Last July, Howard returned to Europe, met again with Soviet intelligence officials and sold additional information, the affidavit said, citing as its authority a confidential informant interviewed by the FBI a week ago Thursday.

The document also said Howard apparently alluded to espionage activity in his resignation letter to his boss at the Legislative Finance Committee of New Mexico's state Legislature when he wrote: "Well, I'm going, and maybe I'll give them what they think I already gave them."

Before Howard fled his home in Santa Fe, he left a note for his wife, Mary, instructing her to "sell the house, Jeep, etc. and move [in] with one of our parents and be happy." He asked his wife to tell their 2-year-old son goodbye, adding, "I think of him and you each day until I die."

The FBI said its affidavit was based largely on "a confidential source with intimate knowledge of Soviet intelligence matters."

A Senate intelligence panel spokesman said it is safe to assume that the confidential source is Vitaly Yurchenko, whom U.S. officials have identified as one of the most senior officers of the Soviet Committee for State Security, commonly referred to as the KGB.

Yurchenko defected to the West in early August and is undergoing debriefing by CIA officials at an undisclosed location near Washington.